



Department of Transportation  
United States Coast Guard  
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Y2K  
Are you prepared?

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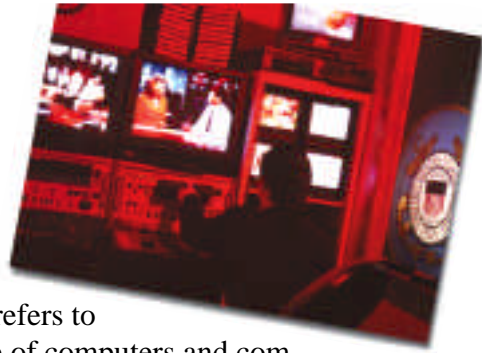
November 1999

December 1999

January 2000

On January 1, 2000, regions of our country could lose electrical power, heat, or telephone service.  
There exists the possibility that you might not have access to your bank or adequate food or gasoline.  
This pamphlet can help you.

The poster features a dark, industrial background with a large, glowing "Y2K" at the top. Below it, the text "Are you prepared?" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. In the center, several calendar pages for the months of October, November, December 1999, and January 2000 are displayed, overlapping each other. The bottom of the poster contains a warning message in yellow text: "On January 1, 2000, regions of our country could lose electrical power, heat, or telephone service. There exists the possibility that you might not have access to your bank or adequate food or gasoline. This pamphlet can help you."



## What is Y2K?

“Y2K” refers to the failure of computers and computerized systems due to the onset of the Year 2000. It is the result of a decision made in the 1960’s to save memory by only tracking years as two digits, instead of four.

On January 1, 2000 many computers will think it is 1900...those computers may stop working, generate bad information, or keep working...individual computers will react differently.

## How big is the problem?

One thing we know about Y2K is that it will be nearly universal...computers all over the world will be affected. Predictions range from minor inconvenience to major breakdown of services, depending on the individual computers or systems...we will be impacted individually, and as a society.

## What are we doing about Y2K?

The Y2K readiness of major U.S. institutions we all depend on... government, utilities, banks, emergency services, communications, and transportation, for instance...has dramatically improved over the past year, as individual businesses and government agencies have tested and fixed computer systems.

*We hope this brochure helps you and your family to prepare for the challenge of Y2K. There is so much we don’t know about just how Y2K will play out. The problems outlined in this brochure may or may not happen. But since there are many unknown factors surrounding Y2K we consider preparation to be the best strategy. We train, plan, and drill all the time for events which might not happen. But we train to be skilled and competent, if they do happen. Semper Paratus is a great motto - one that has been a benchmark for our service for over 200 years. Why not bring it home?*

*For more information contact your unit Command Master Chief, Work-life Staff, read Coast Guard Magazine, Reservist, and Navigator articles. You may also visit these web sites:*

[www.fema.gov/y2k/](http://www.fema.gov/y2k/) or [www.RedCross.org](http://www.RedCross.org)



**Transportation.** *Regardless of what else occurs, you will still need to be able to transport yourself, and perhaps others, from one place to another. Most cars are not affected by Y2K and will be able to drive. However, Y2K may affect traffic lights and station gas pumps. If so, expect traffic to move slower.*

**Medical.** *The importance of remaining healthy cannot be overemphasized, especially if power, heat, light, etc., are not working for up to a week.*

The Coast Guard is conducting a comprehensive review of its systems and service providers to make sure we are able to respond in the Y2K environment.

Everyone who depends on utilities,

**What does Y2K mean for my family, neighbors, and me?**

financial institutions, transportation systems, communications, and government services...in short, all of us...will be inconvenienced if those services are disrupted by Y2K.

While agencies and businesses check and repair their computer systems to ensure the lowest possible level of Y2K interruption, we have to individually prepare to temporarily be without some of the services we take for granted in our daily lives.

Coast Guard personnel are the most important part of our readiness; this information will help you and your family prepare for Y2K, so you can help the Coast Guard deliver the services our customers depend on.

Coast Guard personnel will be expected to perform their jobs regardless of the severity of Y2K,





just as we do in other disasters, such as hurricanes and floods...it is everyone's responsibility to individually prepare.

## How big of a problem am I preparing for?

Prepare as you would for a major storm...only realize your opportunities to relocate may be impacted by the scope of Y2K.

This is the time when most serious Y2K problems are expected to occur and be repaired. This does not mean every service will experience disruptions; the exact effects are virtually impossible to predict. Getting ready for Y2K covers a lot of things that may very well not occur, but would cause major inconvenience if they did. Most household appliances and tools are not effected by Y2K.



They will work, "IF" there is electricity. The greatest inconvenience to your home and family may be from the loss of phones and electricity, which then could affect

water service, sewer service, transportation and shopping.

If you do not prepare early, you may have to pay inflated prices for items you need.

**Lighting.** *Flashlights and battery-powered lanterns are the safest source of alternative light, especially for children. If you use flashlights, ensure you have plenty of batteries.*



**Sanitation.** *Garbage and human waste are a source of disease and attract rodents looking for food. Garbage, sewage and other sanitation services may be out for an extended period due to power outages or other reasons.*

**Phones/Communications.** *Keep in mind with widespread power outages, phones, cell phones, and pagers may not work.*

**Documents.** *It is wise to keep copies of important documents in a safe place, as Y2K may confuse many databases that have these records in them. Having the documents in hand will avoid problems later.*

**Finances** - *It is possible that automatic payments and direct deposits may not get processed properly and bank records may be mixed up. It is also possible that checks/credit cards/debit cards will not be accepted in early January, or ATMs may not have electricity.*



cially in the event of price hikes - these hikes may be illegal and you will need receipts and descriptions to recoup refunds.

## **Will fresh water still pump to my house?**

**Water.** A loss of electricity can mean city water pumps may not pump water to your house. Normal adults drink two quarts per day; children, nursing mothers, and sick people need more. With careful planning you can live on 1 gallon per person per day (2 quarts drinking, 1 quart food preparation, 1 quart cleaning). Again, plan for shortages of store-bought water beginning around December 1st.

Store seven days' worth of water for the entire family, including any pets, in containers such as soda bottles and used water jugs. Be careful storing large quantities of water anywhere but on a slab or strong floor. Water is heavy (8.5

lbs./gallon) and seven days worth for a family of four can weigh 240 lbs. or more. Add chlorine bleach (4 drops/gallon) and store in cool, dark place. If you leave your home vacant (e.g. family goes to live elsewhere) shut off and

drain water lines, so water inside won't freeze and burst the pipes.

**Heat.** If you heat with electricity, oil, or natural gas, expect loss of service for up to seven days.



## **Is where I live and work a part of Y2K?**

Yes. In addition to the uncertainty over just what things might fail, it is widely thought local conditions will play a large part in the severity of Y2K, and the speed with which problems are fixed.

Rural areas will probably have more and longer-lasting service failures; populated areas will probably have shorter, but more severe, interruptions because of the impacts of population.

## **What specific preparations should I make?**

Use the following checklists to think about individual Y2K impacts and how to deal with them. Not all items will apply to you...and there may be others not on the list. The recommendations on what to purchase are just that, recommendations...you must decide for yourself which of the items apply, and whether the recommended levels or dates meet your needs.

Share these checklists with your family...make them a part of Y2K preparation.

## **Other Concerns**

As awareness of Y2K grows, the level of concern grows with it. As in any other emergency, scam artists will try to take advantage of you, your family, or your neighbors by portraying themselves as government employees, repair personnel, or information gatherers.

## **Scam Artists and Thieves**

If you are contacted by anyone claiming to represent any of these functions, observe the following cautions:

**\* NEVER divulge sensitive personal information...credit card numbers, bank accounts, social security numbers, home alarm status, etc...unless you KNOW who you are dealing with**

**\* ALWAYS check out repair people with the Better Business Bureau or Chamber of Commerce**

Loss of electricity, failure of alarm systems, and demands placed on police services for duties such as emergency transport and traffic control, may make Y2K an attractive environment for thieves.

Evaluate your own vulnerabilities and reduce them to safeguard your family and possessions.

**Y2K and your home computer** In addition to concern over power spikes and blackouts, your computer is at risk due to viruses, or “bombs” placed into Windows, and other operating systems, by hackers and criminals.

Many of these viruses are keyed to activate at 12:00 AM on 1 Jan 2000...the easiest way to avoid them is to turn off your computer prior to 12:00 AM, and reenergize it some time after 12:00 AM.

As the approach of Y2K gets more imminent, be especially vigilant about material you down-

To use the checklist, ask yourself this simple question: “Can I, or my family, survive without this particular item?” If the answer is yes, then you don’t need it....but if the answer is no, you should look into buying that item or a suitable substitute.

Also included in the checklist are blank lines, in which you can put those items you feel are necessary, but aren’t already included. We hope the checklist helps you and your family prepare for the challenge of Y2K.

As a member of the Coast Guard you are an important part of our nation’s readiness for Y2K; to meet that duty we want you to know that, as you stand the duty and help others, your family is as safe and comfortable as possible.

**Food.** *Stores may be unable to open and stores that can sell items may* **Will I be able to purchase food and supplies?**

*empty very quickly at higher prices. Short - ages of needed supplies could begin around December 1st as other people’s late preparations begin to affect store supplies. There is no need to buy special foods, if you do not want to, as most grocery store foods will last one year. Buy canned foods, which need minimal cooking. When using food already in the home, use perishables in the refrigerator first, then the freezer, then use dry stores. Keep receipts and description of food items purchased, espe -*



## Safety Tips

Other safety tips important to remember include:

- Make sure you use any alternate heat source in accordance with manufacturer's safety instructions as many of these alternate sources of heat are extremely dangerous
- If you use an open flame, make sure to keep children and pets from it.
- Check railroad and other crossings carefully.

## Fear of Y2K.

There is so much we don't know about just how Y2K will play out; this can lead to fear that is actually more damaging than Y2K itself.



Talk to your family and neighbors about your shared Y2K concerns now; they look to you for answers and advice as a response professional.

You may be the best-prepared and knowledgeable member of your neighborhood; share what you know.

The sooner you begin preparing, the more prepared you will be.

## How do I use this brochure?

The following brief paragraphs include general information to remember when planning your own personal and family preparedness.

Use the checklist to track items you have, need, or decide aren't important for your own safety.

load...always download through an up-to-date virus protection program...to the maximum extent possible, get all your downloads from a vendor you trust.

As recent disclosures about gaming software show, even original material from vendors can contain viruses or undesirable material...be very cautious...if possible, delay downloading until 1/15 to allow for a significant virus detection effort by major vendors on their websites.



If you opt to test your home system for Y2K compliance by setting the date forward, do not allow the system to roll forward from 11:59 PM 31 Dec 1999 to 12:01 AM 1 Jan 2000.

If you do, you may activate the very viruses you are trying to detect...choose a later date to instantaneously transition to...something like 6 Jan 2000, for example.

Changes in the way you perform routine functions, such as using alternate heating, lighting, and cooking methods, may place you at greater risk for a home fire or other catastrophe.

## Safety and Y2K.

Darkness due to power outage may increase the potential for home falls. Local loss of traffic control services may lead to traffic accidents. Just as you do in the Coast Guard workplace, evaluate the hazards and make quality decisions about how to avoid or reduce them for the safety of yourself and your family.




### **Food Preparation/Cooking.**

Store seven-day's worth of bulk and paper goods.  
Baby needs (diapers, bottle liners, lotions, etc.)  
Paper plates  
Aluminum Foil  
Non-Electric Can Opener.  
Utility Knife.  
Propane stove - use only in a well-ventilated environment or outdoors  
Barbecue grill - use outdoors only  
Fireplace  
Wood Stove

### **Water.**


Water heater (make sure you refill the water heater before relighting it, otherwise you will destroy the heater)  
Tops of toilet tanks  
Swimming pools  
Melted snow/ice or captured rain  
Rain Barrels  
Water bed mattress (for flushing only)

### **Heat.**


Wood-burning stove  
Fireplace  
Clean your chimney in October or November.  
Waterproof matches.  
Adequate Fuel (Wood, Coal, Kerosene, Etc)  
Kerosene Heaters

### **Power.**


Have surge protectors for electric appliances and electronic equipment.  
Unplug any unused appliances and equipment, if power goes out, to reduce the potential for damage.  
If you decide to buy a generator, ensure you have either enough fuel for extended use or a specific plan to minimize use  
Store fuel safely and if stored in a confined space watch for gasoline fume buildup and avoid open flames.  
Batteries for Clocks, flashlights, radios  
Hearing Aid or special use batteries  
Solar Re-charger for batteries

### **Light.**


Flashlights  
Propane lanterns - Well ventilated space only  
Oil lanterns  
Candles

### **Sanitation.**


Extratrashbags  
Sanitizingandleanser/soap  
Rodenttraps  
Toiletpaper  
PaperTowels  
Personal hygiene items  
Fill bathtubs to use for toilet flush water.

### **Clothing/Bedding.**


Have enough clothing to keep warm, even indoors, if the weather is cold or has the potential to become cold.  
Consider using extra bedding at night to keep warm.

### **Communications.**


Know if you need to go to work in the event of a power outage.  
Tune a battery operated radio to the local Emergency Broadcast System station.

### **Pet Supplies.**


Food  
Medicine  
Water  
Grooming supplies  
Sanitary Supplies

### **Finances.**


Cash. Have access to 1 week of cash reserve. Set some cash aside each month. Expect some price hikes.  
Records - Make copies of important financial records and keep paper copies of all transactions: credit card receipts, bank statements, loan payments, bills, etc. so you can help reconstruct scrambled records


### **Documents.**

Birth Certificates  
Marriage Certificates  
Social Security Cards/Paperwork  
Deeds  
Wills  
Bill Receipts  
Mortgage Papers and Payment History  
Last years Taxes  
Investment Records  
Bank Account Records  
Loan Payments  
Lease Agreements  
School/College Transcripts  
Deed of trust/Promissory notes  
Medical records  
Vaccination records


**Medical.**  
Talk to your neighbors before January 1, 2000, if you do not know them already. They may be able to help if you have a medical emergency and cannot call 911 or your doctor because the phones don't work.


Prescriptions filled for one month  
Special or unique medicines (insulin, blood pressure medicine)  
Find out if your normal health care provider has a Y2K plan to stay open.


### **Transportation.**

Keep a full fuel tank on all vehicles  
Up-to-date public transportation schedules on hand  
Have a vehicle safety kit on hand


### **Home Safety.**

Fully equipped First Aid kits  
Fire extinguishers  
Battery-powered smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.  
Know where your gas and water shut-off valves are and have a wrench available to turn them off to prevent damage to your home.


### **Personal Safety.**

Do you have to answer the door?  
Who is allowed to answer the door?  
Can you see who it is without opening the door?  
Can you talk through a window?  
Do you have to help someone who asks?  
When do you close the door?  
Do you know of another place to go if you feel threatened within your own home?  
Do you have a non-moveable home safe to store money, important documents, and other valuables?


### **Miscellaneous.**


- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not Applicable